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THE STUDY OF EDUCATION IN THE HIGH SCHOOL

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Whether the study of education in the high school is to be commended or condemned, we must face the fact that it has gained a foothold not to be ignored in the secondary education of certain of our states. This situation has developed gradually through a long term of years. As will appear from the following considerations, there are indications that education is destined sooner or later to become generally and definitely recognized as a suitable subject of secondary instruction and to be given a permanent place in representative secondary courses of study; and there are excellent reasons why all this should be fully realized.

At the present time there are at least four states in the Union, Wisconsin, Kansas, Vermont, and Nebraska, in which the study of education in the form of normal training is authorized or required by law to be offered and pursued in high schools of a certain type or standard.

Of these Wisconsin took the first step in this direction in 1875. The Wisconsin statute, as it now stands, provides that—

Each free high school shall offer at least a twelve-weeks' course of instruction each year in the theory and art of teaching; in the organization, management, and course of study of ungraded schools; and in the duties of citizens in the organization of local school systems. Such a course of instruction shall be open to all students in this school and a satisfactory standing in the work of this course shall be a condition precedent to the countersignature of a diploma held by a graduate of the school as provided in sec. 7 of this act.

The countersignature referred to may be made by any county superintendent and the diploma then becomes a five-year teacher's license, provided the holder has secured a first-class certificate which is still in force at the time of the countersignature. The free high schools of Wisconsin, in all of which the theory and art of teaching, school management, etc., must be taught, constitute

the great body of the secondary schools of the state. In view of the length of time this law has been in operation in Wisconsin it seems that its results have been more or less satisfactory.

In 1886 a law was enacted in Kansas establishing four-year normal courses in all the county high schools of the state. Graduates of these schools who have pursued the normal course are granted without examination licenses to teach, valid for two years. At the present time the results of the law seem to be satisfactory, considering the outlay.¹

In regard to the Vermont law State Superintendent Stone says:

In 1896 provision was made for the introduction of the study of education into secondary schools. The purpose of this was to stimulate our normal schools to greater activities in certain lines. The purpose of the law has been served and there is not the demand for its provisions that there was ten years ago. Consequently the number of schools that adopted the provision has been lessening.²

The law provides for at least thirty weeks of daily study and instruction in education suitable for teachers in common schools. No high-school credit is given for the work, but those graduates who have taken it and have passed the required examination upon it are granted a second-grade teacher's certificate, valid for two years, in recognition of the training thus received.

In 1905 and 1907 two laws relative to normal training were enacted by the legislature of Nebraska. They went into effect in 1907. They are designed to establish strong courses in some seventy of the best high schools of the state for the training of teachers for the rural schools. State aid to the amount of \$350 per year is granted each school that complies with the prescribed conditions and is approved and designated by the superintendent of public instruction. Definite professional requirements, fixed by the law of 1905 for the first-grade and second-grade county certificates, may be met by taking normal training in these high schools. The law of 1907 requires among other things that the

¹ J. W. Searson, *Nineteenth Biennial Report of Superintendent of Public Instruction*, Nebraska, 1906, p. 165.

² *Ibid.*, p. 163.

schools approved for normal training shall be on the accredited list of the University of Nebraska, that the training shall be given in the eleventh and twelfth grades, and that it shall consist of a review of at least nine weeks each in reading, grammar, arithmetic, and geography, a semester's work in American history, and "at least seventy-two periods of professional training to include a study of methods, school management, observation work, etc," which must be given by the city superintendent or a member of the high-school faculty approved by the state superintendent. A large bulletin treating of this subject, issued by the State Department of Nebraska in December, 1907, states that sixty-four high schools had been approved on application for instruction in normal training during the year 1907-8, and that 1,103 qualified students had subscribed to the declaration or promise required for admission to the work. Nebraska educators are hopeful and enthusiastic over the anticipated effects of these laws. State Superintendent McBrien heartily endorses and supports the movement.³

There are also at least three states, New York, Minnesota, and Michigan, in which classes of secondary grade in normal training are maintained by certain boards of education, not as a part of the high-school work proper, but separately, special instructors and separate rooms being provided. In all three states the boards are stimulated to establish and maintain these classes by means of state aid. The state provision for the classes was made in the interest of the rural schools. Their significance in this connection comes from the fact that they are parts of the secondary-school organization of ordinary school districts.

The beginning of the present notable system of teachers' training classes in New York was made in 1834, when the state legislature enacted a law providing for normal instruction in eight academies properly distributed throughout the state.⁴ The academies of that period were the predecessors of the modern

³ *Nineteenth Biennial Report of Superintendent of Public Instruction, Nebraska, 1906*, pp. 40-49, 99-192.

⁴ Frank H. Wood, *Nineteenth Biennial Report of Superintendent of Public Instruction, Nebraska, 1906*, pp. 173, 174.

high schools. The movement thus inaugurated gradually gained in scope and in importance, and the training classes of New York have long been noted for the magnitude of their work and their efficiency. During the year 1905-6 ninety-seven training classes were maintained and 1,185 teachers were graduated from them. The course of study is one year in length.⁵ Andrew S. Draper, commissioner of education of the state of New York, in the annual report of the State Department for 1906, speaks in the following strong terms:

The most fruitful if not the most hopeful source of good teachers for the district schools is found in the training classes. . . . The requirements for admission to them for the coming year have been materially increased, and in the years hereafter it is confidently believed that this agency for providing teachers for the rural schools will be ever increasing in its efficiency.⁶

Graduates of the training classes have certain small advantages in the matter of certification. In addition to the training classes, what are known as teachers' training schools are similarly maintained in numerous cities, but these will not be here considered since graduation from a standard high school or equivalent qualifications is a requirement for admission to them.

In Minnesota, under the authority of a statute of 1895, normal instruction in the common branches is given in connection with a dozen or more of the state high schools, but as already noted, it is separate and apart from the regular high-school work. Though the law does not specifically mention instruction in the theory and practice of teaching, it was ascertained through correspondence that such instruction is given in the training classes. Conditions seem to have been more or less unfavorable for the success of this movement in Minnesota.⁷ No provision seems to have been made whereby special consideration in the matter of certification is shown those who complete the work of the training classes.

⁵ *Third Annual Report of New York State Education Department*, 1907, p. 17.

⁶ *Second Annual Report of New York State Education Department*, 1906, p. 16.

⁷ *Fourteenth Biennial Report of Superintendent of Public Instruction*, Minnesota, 1906, p. 20.

In 1903 a law was enacted in Michigan authorizing, under certain conditions, one board of education in any county not containing a state normal school to establish and maintain a county normal training class. One of the conditions is the gaining of permission from the state superintendent. These classes offer a one-year course of study. They are open to persons at least seventeen years of age with certain minimum academic or academic and professional qualifications, which are approximately equivalent to those attained by the completion of the second year of a standard high school. The certificate of graduation from a training class in Michigan is a three-year license to teach in schools employing not more than two teachers. At the termination of its validity the certificate may be renewed by the authority which granted it. During the school year 1906-7 thirty-two of these classes were in operation in the state. With reference to them State Superintendent Kelley says:

The reports of the commissioners [county superintendents] shows conclusively the wisdom of the Legislature in authorizing the establishment of these classes. . . . I consider the establishment of the county training class one of the greatest steps educationally that has been taken in Michigan in recent years.⁸

But normal training in secondary schools is not confined to those states in which it is required or authorized by law, though in general it is most extensively given in such states. In practically all sections of the country public and private secondary schools are to be found which offer normal training in some form. The "reviews" so frequently given in the senior year of the high-school course are in a real sense normal training, considering their primary purpose. Distributed here and there throughout the country are high schools aggregating a considerable number which maintain normal courses parallel with English, Latin, and scientific courses. Those of Kansas have been noted. The majority of such high schools are of the lower grades of schools. A considerable proportion are not in the four-year class. Also there is a much larger number of secondary schools,

⁸ *Seventieth Annual Report of Superintendent of Public Instruction, Michigan, 1906*, p. 19.

outside of the states considered, that offer courses of one or more semesters in education under the names didactics, methods of teaching, pedagogy, psychology, and kindred titles. Thus in Iowa, where nothing is to be found in the code relative to the study of education in secondary schools, all three of these classes of schools are represented. A large number of Iowa secondary schools offer the "reviews" in the later years of the course, though this name is not used in many cases; a few, most of which are small schools not on the accredited list of the state university, have normal courses; and a considerable though relatively small number, irrespective of size or grade, offer one or more short courses in education in the junior and senior years, chiefly the latter. Some of the other states in which normal training is given in high schools were ascertained by correspondence with the state departments of a few representative states. It was learned that such training is given in certain public and private secondary schools in Virginia, Georgia, and Arkansas. State Superintendent Jones of Tennessee writes that it is purposed to have a course in pedagogy incorporated in the new county high schools of that state for the training of teachers for the rural schools. The writer did not attempt to secure a complete list of the states in which secondary instruction in education is offered. So much for the development and present status of the study of education in the high school.

[To be concluded]